SABARTIA

I had come to San Cholitas by way of Nuevo Laredo, on the Rio Grande just across from Texas. San Cholitas, very near to Sabinas, is a tiny community in the state of Coahuila. I was like those who had founded Nuevo Laredo in 1848.

I, too, was trying to distance myself from the United States of America.

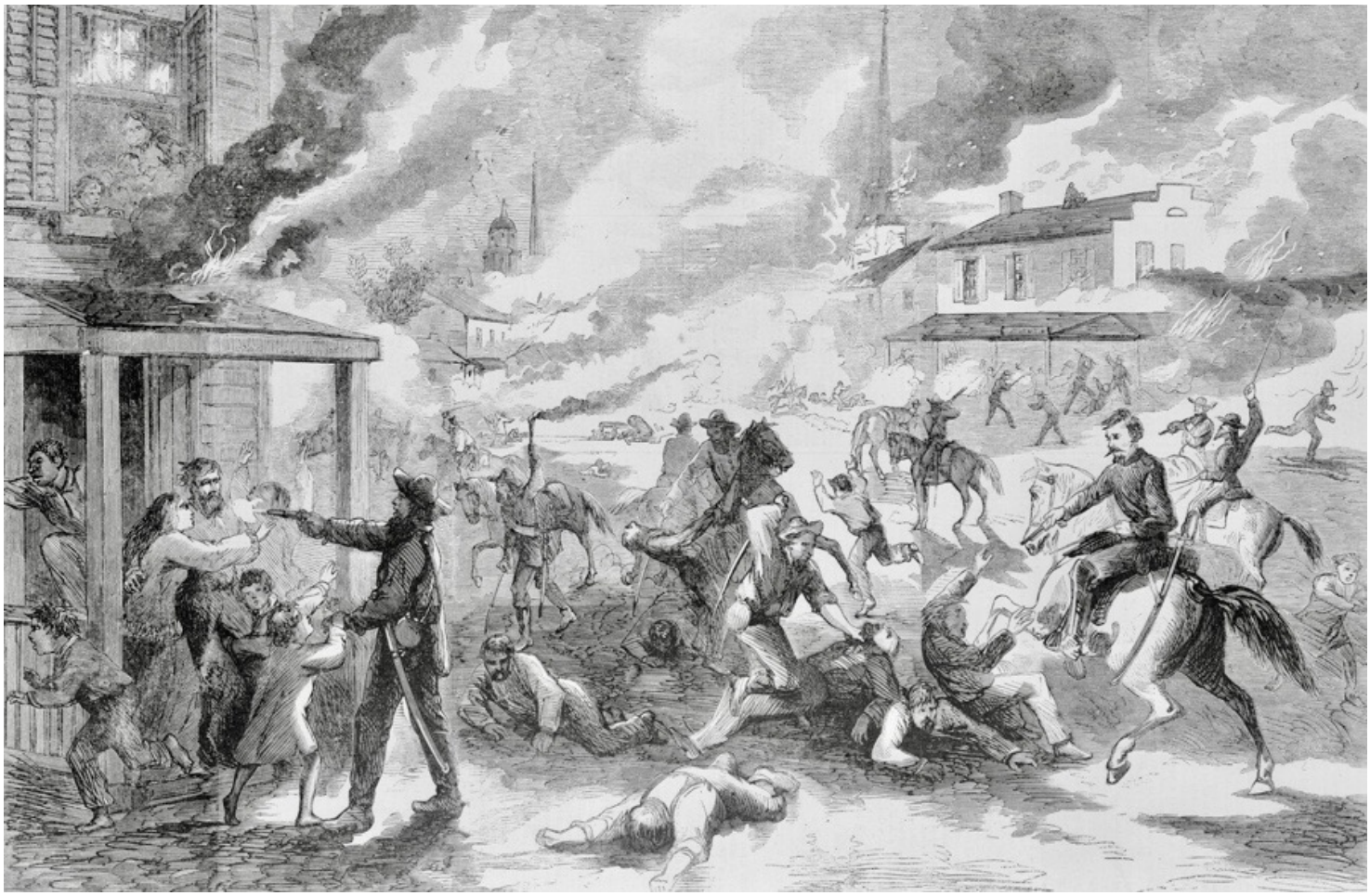
I had been identified as a Confederate bushwacker, a man who had ridden with the Confederate guerrilla, W. C. Quantrill, during the attack on Lawrence, Kansas.

Yes, I was with him on August 21st, when the attack on Lawrence took place.

I had originally been one of the ones who had been detained by Union General Thomas Ewing, Jr., and because of this, my destiny was sealed. I was in that jail that had collapsed on either August 13th, or 14th, 1863; the one which had killed Josephine Anderson, and three other young women, as well as injuring many others.

Josephine had been my fiancee.

Bloody Bill Anderson
the brother of my fiancee, Josephine Anderson



The Attack on Lawrence, Kansas

Jenny, her sister, was crippled for life in the collapse.

I had escaped death because I had been out sick in a hospital when the building had given way.

I do not remember much about the collapse; only that it happened. I had been very ill and in bed with fever, which had finally broken some time on the 14th.

During the confusion, I had also been able to escape from my captivity, as I was by then well enough to escape.

Upon learning of my escape, Jenny had begged one of her friends to give me a small package to take to her brother,

Bloody Bill Anderson, who was at the time also an associate of William Quantrill.

Little did I know that I was riding right into the Lawrence Massacre being then planned by Quantrill's Raiders.

Suffice it to say that General Ewing covered for his error in allowing my escape by saying that Quantrill's men had broken me out, and had made sure I was with them on the morning of the attack.

He claimed later that it was Frank and Jesse James who had personally broken me out of jail.

That was a lie, but it got General Thomas Ewing out of trouble for my untimely escape.

And that was how I had come to be one of Quantrill's Raiders.

As I approached their camp on the morning of the 21st, I had given the proper signals to be admitted by the camp guards who had been hiding up in the trees.

It was 3:30 in the morning, and all was yet very quiet.

By 4:30, they were all up and packed, and ready to ride.

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Having been deliriously ill for several weeks beforehand, I had absolutely no idea where they were going, nor what they were planning; I was just along for the ride.

I had delivered my package, and would be with them for another day or two before heading back to Virginia, where I still owned some land as far as I knew.

But when talk of the raid started, I knew that if I tried to leave, they would shoot me dead.

They just could not risk someone leaving the camp who knew about the coming attack.

Anyway, I did not participate in the massacre; I escaped while it was still in session.

Of course, that's not the story that the Yankees like to tell.

They *yet* want to hang me for my part in the raid.

So, I can never go home again.

I headed South after the raid, and then crossed the Rio Grande into Mexico at Nuevo Laredo.

On the morning of the raid, a month earlier, I had been given a brace of 1858 Remington pistols, and about 12 loaded spare six shot cylinders with which to speedily reload.

They had been loaded already with ball and shot.

Twelve of these loaded cylinders were issued to me on the morning of the attack on Lawrence, Kansas.

The horse that I was riding had also been loaded with ball and black powder reserves, as well, on the morning of August 21st; I had enough ammunition to fight my own war.

But on the day of the massacre, I never fired a single shot.

I stayed back, and then took off behind some buildings, making good my final escape from everyone.

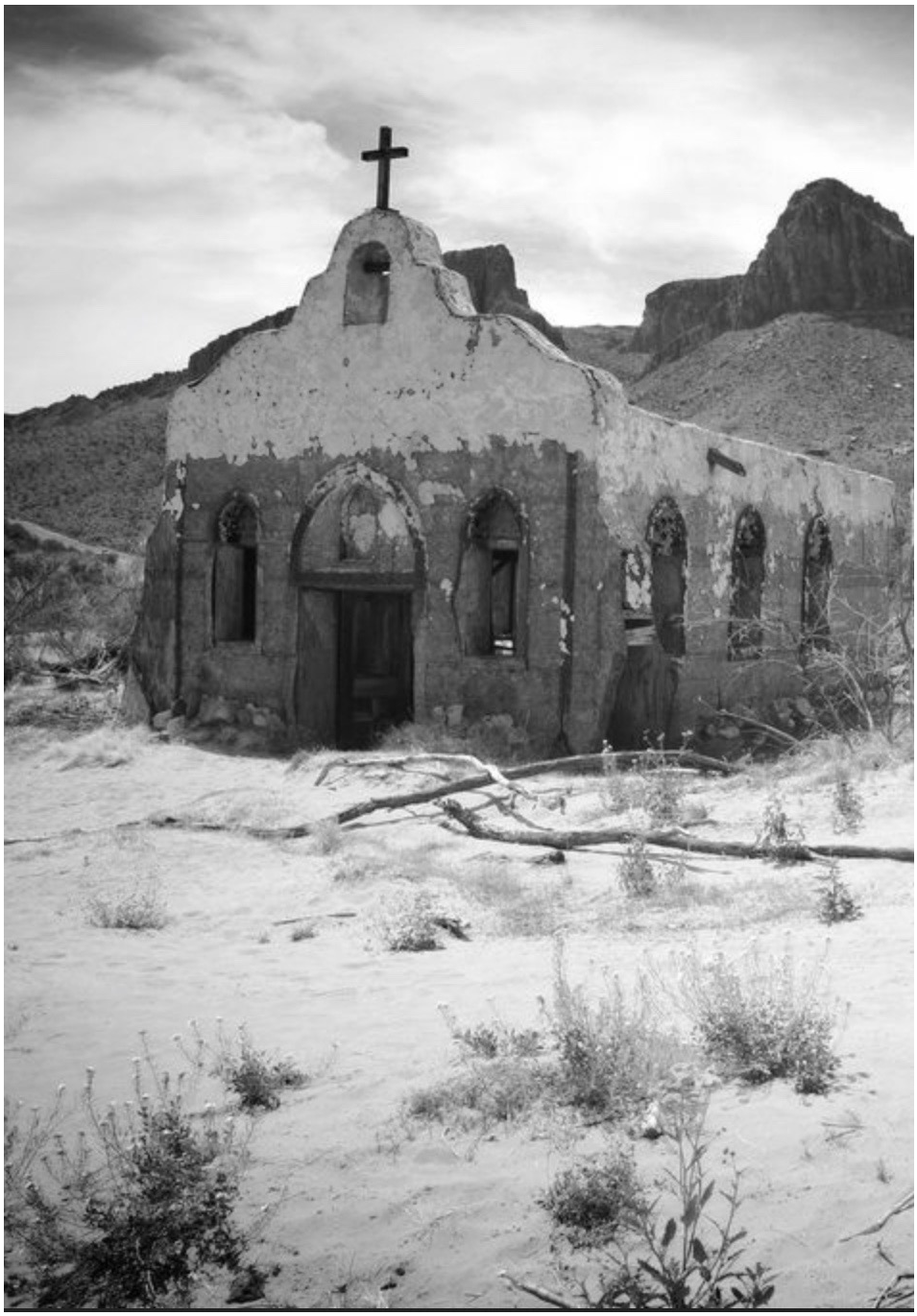
What did I know of firearms? I had never even held one of these guns before.

That all changed once I crossed the border.

I began to practice daily with my weapons, gaining some proficiency with them, in the coming days.

I arrived in San Cholitas on a Saturday some weeks after the Lawrence massacre. It was Fall of the year, but still as hot as hell in Mexico.

I did not know the name of the town when I arrived; it did not seem like a town, at all. It seemed like a dirt street with a few buildings on either side of the road. No boarded sidewalks, nor any watering troughs for the horses. No great white rounded top church at the other end of the dirt street; just another entrance to the street.



There was no great white rounded top church at the end of the street; just this small adobe chapel, nearly abandoned.

At first, I thought it had been abandoned.

In the middle of the buildings off to my right, I saw a small, squat adobe looking structure that was quite different from the clapboard buildings all around it.

I thought it was cute, and so, I came up to the small front gate, which entered into an exposed patio which was a small wooden flooring upon which were situated four sets of tables and chairs; like a restaurant might have.

At one of the tables were three Mexican men, drinking cerveza and eating chapati bread.

"Está muy lejos de casa," said one of the men.

He is a long way from home.

"Si. Creo que está perdido," smiled a second man.

Yes. *I think he is lost*.

I tied my horse to the fixed part of the gate, and entered the patio.

An extremely attractive young woman appeared in the doorway of the dwelling, and stopped to stare at me.

"¿Puedo ayudarte?," she asked me, before she caught herself, "*can I help you?*"

"I need a room for a couple of days, and maybe something to eat. Is this a town?," I asked her.

She smiled.

"It thinks it is," she said, warming to me, "this is San Cholitas, but it is not drawn upon any map."

"Is this a restaurant?," I asked her, causing a light laughter from the three at the table.

"*¿Es este un restaurante?*,"I could hear one of them mocking me, as they all three laughed aloud.

"It is my home," said the woman, "but I serve meals to the locals here on the patio."

"I would be very grateful," I said, bowing slightly, "I can pay. I have *real* money. Dinero. Not dollars."

She laughed.

"Eso no es necesario," she said, smiling, "I feed the homeless for free."

"Thank you," I said, smiling at her.

"Bring the *caballo* around back, and water him there," she said.

Her name was Adriana, as I found out later that evening, and she was an excellent cook.

I watered my horse, and fed him some feed from the bag by the stall.

I then took off my shirt, and washed myself generously in the horse trough from the waist up. I had a clean dry shirt in my saddle bags, and as I took the saddle from my horse, I tossed it over a part of a fence rail which could have only been built for that purpose. I dried off with an old towel I found hanging by the trough, and dried my wet hair with a few wipes of the towel.

I put on my clean shirt, and as I was buttoning it up, Adriana appeared in the

back doorway.

"There is no hotel here," she said, now, a bit hesitantly, "but as there is but one of you, I can offer you the stable boy's room for a few days. It is just behind you. You may secure your things in there, and lock them in the great trunk, just inside the door.

"I do thank you very much," I said, and she handed me the key to the great trunk.

I locked my saddle and my scant other gear in the great trunk, and as the key was fastened upon a great lanyard, I secured the key around my neck.

I then walked back around the small stone walk which led to the front of the home, to the patio restaurant.

The three amigos were now gone, and in their place was a piping hot array of foods, just waiting for me to help myself. She must have some magical power, I thought, to be able to prepare a meal so swiftly.

The meal was marvelous. Tortillas with meat, cheese, tomatoes, and everything else imaginable. A cold mug of cerveza sat beside the plate, and I sat and ate just as if I had never had a meal in my life.

Adriana came outside, and sat down at the table with me. She had brought me another mug of cerveza, and sat it down next to the

first one.

"You are an excellent cook," I told her, "thank you so much."

"I am glad to have you," she intimated, "we rarely get any visitors out here; especially not Anglos from the United States."

I laughed.

"What's funny?," she asked me, smiling, "*¿Qué es gracioso?*"

"I am not an Anglo," I said.

"No?," she smiled, now intrigued, "You speak the language."

"You *also* speak the language," I told her, "but I am no more Anglo than you are."

"What are you, then?," she wanted to know.

"Same as you," I told her, "I am a Celt, also."

"From where?," she asked me.

"My people are from Wales and Scotland," I said, "I am Welsh and Scots."

"Well, I meant *white*," she explained.

"My grandfather's grandmother," I said, "was a full-blood Apache Indian."

"It doesn't show," she said, "you look *white*."

"I am also a Southern national," I told her.

"Your country is being destroyed," she told me, as if I did not know that, already.

"Which is why I am down here," I said.

"But, your people need you, now. You should be with them, at this time."

"The Anglos," I said, "are destroying us. That is why I am not an Anglo; they are destroying us, and *only* because we are not exactly like them."

I looked at her.

"The same reason that they hate you, and your people; because you refuse to be like them; to live under their ways, and to become just like them."

She seemed to have a moment of enlightenment.

"You think that you are closer to me than to the Anglo?," she asked, surprised.

"I know it," I said, "you are Celtiberian; I am a Celtic Briton. We were once the same race of people."

She laughed out loud.

"I like you, Thomas," she said, remembering my name that I had told her, only the once, "you make me laugh. But you are still *white*!"

"That I am," I smiled at her.

I stayed on in San Cholitas; perhaps that was for the best; perhaps not.

Over the next few weeks, Adriana learned of my 'crime' of having ridden with the Quantrill gang into Lawrence, Kansas, and also of my escape from there, at that time.

She learned about '*Josey*,' my fiancee, Josephine; she who had been killed in the collapse at the jail, and her family association with Bloody Bill Anderson.

She also learned about the curious *bushwacker* belt assembly and holsters which I had worn about my chest on the first day that she saw me.

They crossed my heart, after the manner of the banditti; the bandits.

I explained that I had been given those to wear on the morning of my ride into Lawrence; that they were not mine before that day.

On the first night that she had fed me, I had locked them in the great trunk, and had not worn them to eat.

"That first night," she told me, later, "you did not wear your guns to supper. Why?"

"Because I would not wear them at your table," I said.

"But what if someone were to trouble you, while you were eating?," she asked.

"No one here is violent," I told her, "I did not think that I would be troubled by anyone."

"That is because of the Segunda Intervención Francesa en México," she said, "San Cholitas is now left mostly with old men and young girls. We have lost so many brave men to the wars."

"I do not feel threatened here," I told her, "I like your town and your people. They are very pleasant. I have no home, now,

thanks to the wretched *yanqui* nation of extortioners. Those horrible invading gringo *bastardos*."

She smiled sympathetically.

"And your food is some of the best I have ever tasted. A man could get used to eating so well."

She blushed at that.

"And *you feed the homeless for free*," I said, as she waved me playfully away.

"You play too much," she teased, "always you do this."

Eventually, she asked me to wear at least one of the guns at all times.

At the time, I thought nothing of it; everyone wore a gun in the way of the American cowboy; one revolver over one's hip on a leather belt, tied down around the upper thigh to prevent the weapon from coming up off the leg while on horseback.

Men also wore their guns like that to quick draw in the streets.

I secured a black Mexican holster and belt at the local tannery, and began to wear them every day. She also wanted me to practice shooting every day; to become proficient with my weapons.

"I have plenty of black powder and ball shot," she said.

At the time, I did not think that this was strange, but later on, it should have told me something about her.

"Your presence here with those guns is a comfort to the locals," she explained, "for while we are all armed, none of us is very likely to do much if anything should happen here."

As she was now providing me ball and shot and bottles to blow off the fence post out back, I obliged her.

The locals would pass behind the house, in the great expanse of wasteland that was her back yard, and they would wave, and say, *hola!* every chance they got.

I was very careful not to fire my pistols in their general direction at any time.

Before coming here to San Cholitas, my Spanish was non-existent. I spoke not a word of it, at all.

After a few months here, I began to understand the simple phrases, and also to speak to Adriana in her native tongue, from time to time, which seemed to please her greatly.

One afternoon, several young women were passing by my small shooting range just behind the place; most likely just to see me as I was practicing my bottle-popping skills.

One of them was not smiling.

In fact, this one never smiled.

I listened to their words as they passed. They spoke loudly, thinking that I could understand none of what was being said between them.

"¡El bushwacker vuelve a hacerlo hoy!," she laughed.

The bushwacker is at it again, today!

"¡Mira las botellas mientras saltan por él! ¡él está mejorando!," said another.

Look at the bottles while they jump for him! He's getting better!

(*Bushwacker?)*

Only Adriana knew about that.

She must have told it about me, or else it was overheard at some time.

Finally, the one who never smiled spoke.

"El es un criminal; no mejor que esa maldita Sabartia," she said, most decidedly.

He is a criminal, no better than that damned Sabartia.

"¿Por qué dices eso?," they wanted to know.

Why do you say that?

"A Adriana solo le gustan los delincuentes. Las mujeres bonitas suelen pertenecer a los delincuentes," was the reply.

Adriana only likes criminals. Pretty women usually belong to the criminals.

I sense someone behind me.

It was Adriana.

"Stupid girls," she spat, "they should stay at home."

She was bringing me a cold bottle of beer.

"Gracias," I said, taking the offered bottle.

I drank a long pull against the hot desert dust in my throat.

God, that was some good *cerveza*.

She smiled, and watched the girls as they walked away.

"Who is Sabartia?," I asked her, wiping my mouth on the back of my hand.

She looked at me.

My Spanish was clearly improving, she could tell.

"No one," she said, looking away.

"Where is he?," I asked.

"Dead," she said, "I hope."

In her prevaricating way, she was telling me everything I needed to know.

Sabartia had most likely been her lover. Now he was gone.

This was very clear to me.

"They think I am a criminal," I said, at last, after another long swallow of beer.

"Good," she said, "I hope they do."

"But why?," I asked, confused.

"Because ever since Sabartia left, the damned Indians sneak into town at night. The cowards among them steal our horses. The brave ones steal our girls."

She looked at me, and stared into my eyes.

"We do not get them back," she finished.

She stared out towards the great rise, in the distance.

"Since you arrived, the Indians have not been seen anywhere along that great ridge. They are afraid of you; of your constant shooting and the aim that you have developed."

Now it made sense.

"But, why did you not tell them that I was a law man?," I asked her, "or something less hard to live down?"

I looked at her.

"Why a criminal?"

"Because law men have to follow *laws*," she said, "and this makes them weak. A criminal has no such weakness. He does as he chooses to do."

"I see," I told her.

"Make no mistake, said Adriana, "The people of this town are glad that you are here. Those girls *would not be out walking* unless you were here shooting your guns."

I nodded, and it was now clear to me.

I would need to stay here to protect the town.

I was there for three months when Adriana and I were out riding one day, down near the old cemetery at the far end of town.

It was siesta time, and everyone was taking their daily nap. But for a people who ate their last meal of the day at 10 p.m. at night, and stayed up half the night thereafter, this was a most common practice.

The heat in the Summer was ungodly hot.

"I have been thinking," I told her.

She looked at me from astride her own horse.

"You need a husband," I said, looking at her, "and I need a better bed than that where a stable boy used to sleep."

She turned her head, but not before the smile blazed its way across her face.

"I told you, already," she said, still looking away, "No man will have me. I am barren. I simply can not conceive a child."

"I simply can't conceive of having any, either," I smiled at her, "they are nothing but problems."

She laughed, but did not turn back to me, just yet.

"Are you asking me?," she said, slowly.

"I am," I said, "Would you marry me?"

She turned back to face me, once again.

"You would stay here?," she asked, "You would be content to live here, in San Cholitas?"

"Of course," I said.

"But, why here?," she asked.

"Because it's the only town that has you in it," I said.

We rode silently back to her home, and I went inside with her.

She then went in towards her bed chamber, to rest during the siesta.

As she went inside the door, she turned to me.

"If you are here in another month," she said, softly, "the answer is yes."

And then she slowly closed the door.

We were quietly married in the small church at the end of town. The wedding was in Spanish, and I knew enough to get by, at this point.

"¿Toma a Adriana como su esposa, señor?," asked the old sacerdote; the priest. *Do you take Adriana as your wife, sir?*

"Si, accepto," I said, smiling at her.

"¿Y tú, Adriana, tomas a Thomas como tu marido?"

And do you, Adriana, take Thomas as your husband?

"Si, accepto," she said, blushing furiously, to the delight of the entire congregation.

We had the small beaded rope around us, and everything. I poured the *Trece Moneras de Oro* - those 13 gold coins - into her hands, and it was done.

She was mine.

I was happy.

And I would never leave San Cholitas alive.

I suppose that I knew it would be this way, from the beginning; that my happiness was to be threatened.

I had heard of Hector Sabartia, long before coming to Mexico. I had heard that he was the fastest gun in the world; no one was faster. No one was more accurate, nor more deadly than he.

I had heard that he had killed 29 men in street duels; *none of them had ever gotten off a single shot*.

I had also heard that he had died.

Shot in the back; just like Jesse James.

Adriana's little patio restaurant grew to six tables, and then eight. And Adriana, who refused to let me do anything to help her run the place, had three young girls working for her; girls who seemingly worshipped the ground upon which I walked.

"These are Consuelo, Inocencia, and Aniceta. These three girls were the last three taken by the Indios, over a year ago." I smiled at the girls, who were overjoyed that I had noticed them, at all.

"A week ago, they were returned to us in the night."

Adriana looked at me closely.

"No explanation; nothing. They were never even harmed."

She continued staring at me.

"This has never happened before," she said, "It is because of you. Because the Indios; they both fear and respect you."

The gravity of that was almost too much to bear.

"Their mothers have offered their services to me, here at my home, to help me serve the townspeople the food that I provide."

She smiled.

"Again, because of you. Because you are mine."

It was a Sunday morning in late November; there was a decided chill in the air.

Adriana and I were lying together on the front porch of our home; the building in which we now lived was right next door to the home she had inhabited for many years.

We had moved next door, and had converted the interior of her former home into a full scale restaurant which opened every evening at 4 p.m., after siesta. It seated 40 people inside, and had eight tables outside. She had a staff of twenty employees, and two managers, and was basically retired, except for the administrative duties.

The morning was silent, almost sacred.

I had taken Adriana to early mass, and we were now resting at home.

The rider was a small speck on the distant horizon when we first noticed him.

Adriana began to stiffen slightly, just as he was within 500 yards of the edge of town.

She knew what was coming, and what was wanted.

She knew that it was death.

As he got within a hundred yards of the edge of town, she turned to me.

"Go out through the house," she said, "Go, and do not look back, again. Remember me, always."

I stared at her.

She knew who this was.

It had to be him.

Sabartia.

I stood up, and went inside.

When the man approached the front porch of the house, he was dressed completely in black, and riding a blood colored stallion.

"Adriana. Ha sido un largo tiempo," he said to her.

Adriana. It has been a long time.

She said nothing.

Fear had closed her pretty little throat.

"¿No tienes palabras para tu hombre?," he wanted to know.

Have you no words for your man?

I slowly walked out onto the porch.

Adriana gasped audibly when she saw that I was still there.

He also seemed shocked, for just a moment.

Shocked that I should present myself, at all.

I was now wearing my side arm.

"¡Tú! ¡Rebelde Bushwacker!," he said to me.

You! Rebel Bushwacker!

So he *had* heard of me, which was probably why he was here, today.

"¡Sal de ese porche y muere como un hombre!"

Come off that porch, and die like a man!

And then, he spoke to Adriana, standing there next to me.

"¿Por qué me avergüenzas con este?," he wanted to know.

Why do you embarrass me with this one?

"El es mi esposo," she said, quietly.

He is my husband.

He laughed aloud.

"¡Entonces eres viuda!," he roared.

Then you are a widow!

And then he looked at me.

"Y él es un tonto. Un muerto," he said, softly.

And he is a fool. A dead one.

He stared at me, for a few moments; trying to assess me.

"Tu tienes a mi mujer," he said to me, at last.

You have my woman.

And then he stared at me.

"Y tendré tu vida."

And I will have your life.

I did not move, right away.

Instead, I regarded him evenly.

He waited.

I slowly made my way off the edge of the porch, and down the pair of steps onto the dirt street in front of the house.

I could feel eyes upon me everywhere, by this time.

The entire town was watching from hidden vantage points; Sabartia had returned, and had found his woman married to another man.

Sabbath, or not, they were going to watch this exchange.

"You are more man than most," he said, "I give you that."

Then he added.

"But you will die like all the rest."

He got down from the blood bay stallion, and tied it up in front of our home.

"You choose the moment," he said, " I will await your convenience, as they say."

He walked out into the middle of the street, and he walked away from me, as if he was leaving without his horse. He put thirty yards between us, and then he turned towards me.

He relaxed, and flexed his fingers once, or twice.

It was now my turn.

I wandered into the center of the street, and I looked back at Adriana.

She was visibly crying, now.

Our eyes met, and she smiled at me.

I would at least die like a man who had been worthy of her vows.

That was very important in Mexico.

I then looked back at Sabartia.

"You may shoot whenever you like," he said, smiling at me.

His hands rested upon the front belt, on either side of the buckle.

They were nowhere near his gun, at all.

I might die here, today, I thought, but he's going down with me.

I would not leave Adriana to have to lay with this monster ever again.

The one who had killed her husband.

I had to live long enough to kill him.

His gaze flickered, slightly.

He *knew* what I was thinking.

He could see it in my eyes.

That is indeed a noble thought," he said, "but no one yet has been able to take me with him, when he dies."

He smiled at me.

"Perhaps *you* will be the first?," he asked.

Then, he laughed.

"You know who I am," he said, "and you know that you have had my woman. I must have satisfaction from this betrayal."

Then, he looked right at Adriana.

She looked defiantly right back at him.

"You could have left," he continued, "when she told you to leave."

He regarded me fiercely, once again.

"I know she told you to leave. She would do that. I know her better than you."

He sighed aloud.

"But you; you have chosen death."

"I will not leave her," I said, "I can not. I swore till death do us part."

"Then so be it," he snarled.

I said nothing in return.

"Come on, gringo," he said, "it is a nice day, and you are wasting it."

The air grew deathly still.

Everything moved in a slow motion.

I was ready.

He did not stiffen, but he could feel that it would be soon.

I had been training for this moment, unbeknownst to Adriana, or to anyone else.

It was a very *quick-draw* maneuver I had been working to get right; to do it without thinking.

As someone was once supposed to have said, "fast is fine, but accuracy is final."

I was just about there, now.

Just about ready.

"This is your first time," he said, "and you may not be able to shoot another man. Some men can *not* do it, *even if they want* to."

He paused, to let that sink in.

"But I am going to kill you, today. This is just a formality."

He narrowed his gaze.

"I am ready," he said, "and now, we shoot.

I took a deep breath.

He stood up straight, his fingers flexing on his gun hand. Once; twice, yet never leaving the front buckle of his gun belt.

His confidence was staggering.

Overwhelming.

Paralyzing.

It happened before I knew it.

I had pulled my gun, cocked the hammer, and had discharged a round before I even knew *what it was that I had just done*.

It had been that *brutally* quick.

It was the fastest draw I had ever done in my entire life.

The fastest one I had ever seen,

As the smoke cleared in front of my barrel, I could see that the man standing before me was still there; still standing.

And there was this growing, burning sensation in my lower gut, right across my abdomen.

I was hit, and it was bad.

I breathed deeply against the growing pain in my stomach.

I smiled weakly, and then laughed, slightly.

Damn, he was fast.

He was *way* faster than I was, *or would ever be*.

I never had a chance.

In that tiny space of time that I had been firing my gun, he had found his own holster, drawn his own gun, had discharged his weapon, and *had already re-holstered his revolver*, once more, before I had fired my own shot.

He would not need to shoot again; I was hit center mass, and it was over.

I would drop to my knees in another several seconds.

My breathing was shallow, and irregular.

I looked up one more time; I just wanted to see the knowing smirk upon his dark face, realizing that he had just killed me.

Instead, I saw him looking down at his shirt.

There was a large stain of blood now showing across the front of it.

Impossible.

I could not have splashed him with my blood from way back here.

He was touching the massive dampness that was over his heart, and now, he looked up at me in a great and growing alarm.

But not before he fell face down into the dirt.

Hector Sabartia was dead.

And, in just a moment, I would join him.

^^^^^^

I don't know how many hours later it was, nor how many days.

I awoke with a bandage across the front of my stomach; one soaked through with blood.

I could hear disjointed voices through the fog of my sleep-soaked mind.

"¡El héroe está despierto! ¡El asesino de Sabartia vive!"

The hero is awake! The killer of Sabartia lives!

¡Llama a Adriana! Ella debe saber!

Call Adriana! She must know!

I kept passing out again, and again.

Three weeks after the gunfight, I finally regained consciousness, and actually kept it.

I awoke to Adriana trying to give me some water.

"Debes beber, mi amor. Morirás si no lo haces. Tu cuerpo se apagará," she said.

You must drink, my love. You will die if you do not. Your body will shut down.

"Gracias," I said, slowly sipping the wonderfully cold liquid.

When I could sit up a little, I asked her how long I had been out.

"Tres semanas," she said, "*and every bit of three weeks*. I did manage to get some water down you, every so often. It was hard."

"Me has salvado la vida," I told her.

You have saved my life.

"And you have saved all of our's," she said, "the Indians have even returned several more girls, from long ago. You have bested *el Diablo*, and now they truly fear and respect you."

She smiled at me.

"You turned sideways just as you fired," she said, "and that was what saved you."

I laughed, which hurt quite a bit.

"I don't remember doing it," I said, now very truthfully, "I'll have to remember that."

She smiled.

"I hope that no one else ever comes to challenge you," she said, "and hopefully, the story of how you killed Sabartia will remain locked away here in San Cholitas, at least until we are old enough to be unrecognized in the streets."

And so did I.

THE END

About the Author

George Roland Wills has authored a number of books on Amazon in both fiction and non-fiction, as well as in all of the formats offered; ebooks, paperbacks and hardbound volumes. He has published volumes of poetry, short and long stories, novels and novellas.

"I try to write the kinds of books that I used to like to read growing up; books that take you on journeys to places that you've wondered about visiting."

"There weren't that *many* books that had this effect upon me. Of those which *did* have this effect upon me, none of them seem to be from the same group of writers or genres. These books vary greatly from one to another; books such as the *Sherlock Holmes* series done by either Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, or Nicholas Meyer; the early Stephen King stories before he ran out of established monsters upon which to capitalize, *The Mirror* by Marlys Millheiser, *The Diary of a Catholic Bishop* by Edward Carben, *Dracula* by Bram Stoker, *Jaws* by Peter Benchley, *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* by Richard Bach, and any of the early paperback horror anthologies from the 1950's, 60's, and

70's."

"Naturally there were others, but of those which just came readily to mind, I would be hard pressed to identify why these volumes were so remarkable to me at that time."

"*Rereadability*, like some movies are said to be rewatchable; having that sort of *rewatchability*; this is certainly important. Such books that have this quality are written in such away that you *enjoy the process of getting through the story*, and not just the accomplishment of finishing the book."

"I tried to write my own books with that particular quality to them. The way that I chose to do that was to write about a subject upon which I was keenly interested; to have created characters whom I personally would like to meet in real life; to have them endure a storyline whose journey is rewarding to the characters in question; I'm not trying to duplicate real-life; I'm actually trying to give my reader an enjoyable place to escape; one in which he can completely believe."

"I realize that I'll never be important as a writer creating such places, but as there are very few important writers

who have this effect upon *me*, I'm not particularly bothered by not being in their company."

"I would *much* rather have a housewife in tears of joy upon completing one of my books, and telling me just how 'good' it was, and how 'satisfying' the ending was for her, than for every Ivy League school in the country to require book reports for any of my various works."

"I also try to come up with some extremely interesting premise when I write; something I used to call the *what if? situational*."

"This idea starts with the characters and then proceeds on through to the final plot development."

"Let's say that I'm writing about a truck driver; I'll have him do something fascinating; something unusual. I'll have him listening to classical music instead of modern country crossover, or even that caterwauling stuff."

"And I'll carry it through, as well. I'll have him listening to *Bruch's Violin Concerto One in G Minor* by Jascha Heifitz, or Sibelius *Symphony No. 1 in E Minor Opus 39* by the Royal Philharmonic."

"The main purpose for doing this is to convince the reader that he does not know anything about what he is going to be reading; that he cannot count on his past experiences to set the tone for him, as he may possibly expect to get from other books."

"It is also to convince the reader that he wants to read further, even if just to understand a truck driver who is well-versed in a form of music completely at odds with his given culture and background; to understand why this particular man enjoys this particular form of music."

"This is what is enjoyable for me."

"Of course, this *what if? situational* is going to play into the plot of the story, as well."

"Let's say he comes upon a vehicle stuck in a snow bank out in the middle of nowhere. He stops and gives the man in the vehicle a ride to the next town, effectively saving his life."

"Along the way, the passenger hears a classical song playing on National Public Radio inside the cab of the truck. It is an obscure piece, one they happen to be showcasing that night."

"Do you like that?," asks the trucker.

"Very much," says the passenger.

"I notice you have a violin case," says the truck driver, "it was the only thing you took out of the car besides your bag. Can you read music well?"

"I can," says the passenger.

"This song that is playing," asks the truck driver, "could you play this song?"

"Of course, I could play it," says the passenger, "I wrote it."

"It is then that both the truck driver and the reader realize that a man who was stupid enough to get caught in a

snow bank in a rental car in a foreign country is one of the world's foremost violin composers and prodigies."

"Naturally such a story has a great deal of coincidence to it, but I think such a story, *should I ever write it*, would be satisfying enough to overcome such coincidence; especially in a short story."

"Another thing that I like to try to do in telling my stories was done in the *SABARTIA* story; have good triumph over evil when the main character is brave enough to deserve it."

"Thomas swore to stay with Adriana until death did they part."

"Death shows up in the form of Hector Sabartia, but instead of running away from his obligation, Thomas stands firmly to meet his obligation; to protect his wife from this monster who would surely abuse her for having been with another man, had Thomas ran out the back door, like a coward."

"Indeed, his *one* thought is living long enough to kill Hector Sabartia before he himself dies."

That makes Thomas *braver* than the gunfighter, Hector Sabartia. Hector is *assured* of winning the engagement, as always. He risks *nothing* in trying to shoot Thomas down."

"In my story, Fortune favors the bold, and the brave."

"It is also not wise in the karmic cycle to come between a man and his wife."

"One other thing I enjoy in storytelling is creating places like *San Cholitas*; this disgusting little excuse for a community that is in fact one of the best little towns in the world simply because of the people who live there."

"I love irony, foreshadowing, suspense, deus ex machina, absurdity, hyperbole, and double entendre; there is an art to each of these; one that I strive to accomplish each time."

George plans to continue writing fiction so long as the ideas keep showing up.

"It's like Stephen King once said; you have to get these ideas out of your head and onto paper. There is something terribly satisfying about going back and reading a story you wrote thirty years ago; one that you do not even *remember* writing."

But it was not always that way.

"I remember a time before I could write, or rather, before I *realized* that I could write. It was like that time before I realized that I could draw."

"I remember thinking to myself, "why could I not have come up with Sherlock Holmes, or James Bond, for Kwai Chang Caine, or The Road Warrior?"

"Why could I not have dreamed up the cool ideas behind *Jurassic Park*?, or *Jaws*?, or *The Quick and the Dead?,* or *Obsession?*, or any number of other plot ideas?"

"I remember a time when I would sit in front of a typewriter for hours at a time, and absolutely nothing would ever come out; a time before I became a writer when I *wanted* to write, but did not know how to do it."

"I could not *suspend disbelief* long enough to write a sentence, let alone a paragraph."

"There *is* a process that finally comes to you, and you start using it to write. But it's like the muse is trying to see whether you're worthy enough to even have the proper ideas and tools to do the job; whether you will ever be committed enough to get the job done."

"And as it turns out, the most enjoyable part of the process of writing for me is actually going back years later, and then reading your own work again."

"And that, I think, is what makes it all worth while; when you become that writer who perfectly feeds the reader in you."

"When *your* stories are better to you than anything you have ever read or seen before. *Then* you will know that you have finally arrived."

- *George Roland Wills*
20 September 21

I have written and published both fiction and non-fiction books as well as a poetry anthologies. - in hardbound, paperback and eBook platforms.

THE AMAZON PUBLISHED NOVELS:

THE PLOT OF PEACEFUL VALLEY is a twelve part science fiction dystopian novel that goes far into the future.

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1. The Plot of Peaceful Valley - The Sins of Rachel Blackwelder (Time frame 2093 A.D.)

2. Brimmer's Revenge - The Plot of Peaceful Valley II (Time frame 2093 A.D.)

3. Rachelle Renae - The Plot of Peaceful Valley III (Time Frame ending in 2111 A.D.)

4. The Transition - The Plot of Peaceful Valley IV (2111 - 3009 A.D.)

5. The Dark One Rises - The Plot of Peaceful Valley V (Time Frame after 3009 A.D.)

6. The Resurrection of Rachel Blackwelder - The Plot of Peaceful Valley VI (Time Frame after 3011 A.D.)

7. Leaving Earth - The Plot of Peaceful Valley VII (Time Frame after 3011 A.D.)

8. A Place Called Heaven - The Plot of Peaceful Valley Part VIII - (3211 A.D.)

9.The Exchange - The Plot of Peaceful Valley Part IX - (3211 A.D.)

10. Going Home - The Plot of Peaceful Valley Part X - (3211 A.D. onward)

11. Eryna Vox - The Plot of Peaceful Valley Part XI - (3211 A.D. onward)

12. The Children of Dawn - The Plot of Peaceful Valley Part XII - (3211 A.D. onward)

THE MASTER OF THE LOST AND FOUND - A Lost in the Snow Story; a contemporary period novel set in 1989, and written in 1989; no GPS, no cell phones, no smart phones, and no internet.

THE UNDERSTUDY OF THE SCARLET SCRIPT: A novel about the making of the movie, THE PLOT OF PEACEFUL VALLEY. Set in the late eighties - early nineties, a young college senior gets a job at STAR ALARMS!, the forerunner to today's modern
SIMPLI-SAFE (who knew I had invented that?!). She is charged with looking into the homes of the stars while they are not at home; as off-sight video security, in the days long before the internet. The screens are supposed to go black when the stars are in residence. She sees a crime being committed against her favorite actress while the actress is at home, and this changes her destiny forever.

THE PURSUIT OF SUNDOWN: My only western to date; A female outlaw masquerades as a man and the only person smart enough to catch her is a fourteen year old girl.

The latest rewrite of ***THE PLOT OF PEACEFUL VALLEY*** has a tie-in scene within this story line.

THE FLIGHT OF THE BORN TO RUN: First grade teacher of the year becomes an interstate felony fugitive when the rescues her little student from a life of child abuse in the home of a sitting senator.

Of Historical Interest:

These five books were the First Full Length Novels of My Juvenilia (written 1989-1991):

THE PLOT OF PEACEFUL VALLEY (1989)

THE MASTER OF THE LOST AND FOUND (1989)

THE UNDERSTUDY OF THE SCARLET SCRIPT (1990)

THE PURSUIT OF SUNDOWN (1990)

THE FLIGHT OF THE BORN TO RUN (1991)

The publication of my first five 'trunk' novels, from 1989 to 1991.

Each of these books were 400 plus page manuscripts typed upon an IBM Selectric.

These books are women's suspense fiction, with female lead characters.

These books were all read onto cassette tapes way back before the age of the audiobook, when spoken books on tape were strictly for the blind. Those old recordings were sold by me as Wheel Novels; I was also the narrator of the stories, as well.

Should anyone wish to hear these original *Wheel Novel* readings in their entirety for free, please visit my ***CaptBeauregards Youtube Channel*** and check the movie lists for the five various full length readings.

Novellas:

These were written between 2009 and 2011:

To Sir, With Love **-** A May December Romance between a young girl and her college professor.

Summer Lovers **-** A group of lifeguards who meet every summer to guard a 360,000 gallon Olympic sized city pool, and the romance that goes on annually between two of the lifeguards.

Short (and Long) Story Anthologies:

I. ***The November Country***: (*paperback*)
Sixteen Fantasy Short Stories from 1984 to 2020.

The November Country was also released to amazon in hardbound, in t*wo* volumes due to its size. These volumes are part one: ***The November Country Revisited***, and part two: ***The November Country revisited Again***.

II. ***South of Margaritaville***:
The 2020 Long Stories of George Roland Wills

III. ***Sister Morphine***: More Short Stories from George Roland Wills from 2020 to 2024.

Of those 16 short stories released in ***The November Country***, a number of these short stories have also been released as stand-alone volumes.

1. ***An Afternoon with Mr. Jefferson***

2. ***Sabartia***

3. ***The Adventure of the Southern Gentleman***

4. ***The Welcome Guest of Avenel and Other Charming Ghost Stories***

Of those four Long Stories found in ***South of Margaritaville***, all of them have also been released as stand-alone books, as well:

1. ***The Whitechapel Changeling***

2. ***The Princess of the West*** *(The Train Ride)*

3. ***The Division Bell***

4. ***The Swamp Witch Legend of Black Water Hattie*** (being comprised of two separate earlier releases, *The Legend of Blackwater Hattie* in ***The November Country***, and *Swamp Witch* from ***South of Margaritaville***).

Finally, an anthology of the four Sherlock Holmes stories have also been released as The Detective Untold.

1. *The Final Problem Revisited* (2020 release).

2. *The Whitechapel Changeling*

3. *The Adventure of the Southern Gentleman*

4. *Jeremy Brett meets Mr. Sherlock Holmes*

NON-FICTION TITLES:

1. ***Fifty Shades of Gray - Everything Ever Written About Extreme Realism***, which is an instructional pencil drawing book for hyper-realism drawing.

It is from a book that I wrote from which I taught my students at my art school, *The Gallery513 School of Art & Portraiture*, which was a series of six satellite schools which ran from 1998 to 2008.

2. ***The Fifty Shades of Gray Drawing and Illustration Praxis*** - a full color release of the actual drawing lessons.

I also have a video by the same title which shows me drawing a portrait from start to finish.

3. ***Advanced Lifeguarding Considerations*** - A book about how to guard the water like an experienced lifeguard.

4. ***The Police War Stories of a Police Officer Family*** - the actual series of memorable incidences that my father, my brother, and I experienced while we were police officers.

5. ***The Substitute Teachers Field Survival Guide*** - a guide for how to handle the world of school children from K through 12; an actual guide about what to do, and what to expect.

6. ***Thomas Jefferson - Architect of Independence*** - which is a companion book to a video I made about his quotes, and his conservative political views.

7. ***A Docent's Tour of Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest and An Afternoon with Mr. Jefferson*** - my actual 2012 era docent notes from my time when I gave tours at Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest.

The book also has an endearing short story that I wrote about Thomas Jefferson's accidental meeting with a young girl from the future; from Thomas Jefferson Middle School.

As it happens, Thomas Jefferson is my Gr(5) Grand Uncle; his older sister, Mary Jefferson Bolling is my Gr(5) Grandmother.

8. ***Alexander Hamilton - The Politics of Treason*** - which is a companion book for a video of the same name.

Finally, I have published four full color hardbound companion books to several movies I made some years ago about the Avenel House in Bedford, Virginia; my home town.

PORTRAIT OF A PLANTATION: The official documentary of The Avenel House, which includes the November 1, 2003 Ghost Photograph of the White Lady Ghost of Avenel; an apparition that appears to be fully formed and standing on the porch.

THE WELCOME GUEST OF AVENEL: Based on a award-winning short story, my fictitious wife and daughter meet the ghost of Robert E. Lee in an reenactment at the home in the year 2015 upstairs in the Lee bedroom, where General Robert E. Lee actually stayed in October of 1867.

AVENEL THE MOTION PICTURE: Originally an idea to film the actual history of the home as a drama, several casting problems arose just before principle filing as to commence, so the story is now based upon the lives of the inhabitants of the home, and is very nearly the actual history of the house. This is a two volume release.